

RTF C23-1

Experimental Film: History and Aesthetics

Fall 98

3-5 MW###

Annie Mae Swift Auditorium; also Louis 119***

Chuck Kleinhans

office: 316 AMS, 491-2255; 491-7315

office hours 3-5 TU and by appointment

chuckkle@nwu.edu

Teaching Assistant, Nina K. Martin

office, TBA during construction

office hours 1-3 Th and by appt.

note****

due to new construction, the meeting place may change during the quarter.

note ###

Because of complications in course scheduling and renovation of screening spaces, the meeting time of C23-1 has changed slightly. There will be no Fri 3-5 class. The class will meet as follows:

For undergrads: MW 3-5

For grad students: M 7-10 pm, and W 3-5

enrollment limit: 60; permission of instructor required. Students must attend first class. Prerequisite: undergrad majors--completion of A and B level requirements (B80-1.-2); nonmajors RTF B20; grads: permission of instructor.

An introduction to the history and aesthetics of the film avant garde from the 1920s in Europe to contemporary US work. Emphasis is on exploring the range of experimental film practice and developing critical and aesthetic concepts for discussing avant garde work. A thematic emphasis will be developed around relations of avant garde cinema in the US in the 50s, 60s and 70s and its relation to the Beat Generation and the 60s counterculture. Additional thematic concerns include the representation of sexuality, including taboo and stigmatized sexuality, and the relation of still photography to the avant garde.

The course combines screenings, lectures, discussions, readings, and off campus screenings. Films are the main texts for the course. Films will be screened in class and cannot be seen at other times. Thus attendance is important and will help determine the grade. Assigned work includes 5 reports on field work in Chicago's experimental film and video scene and adjoining art world, an in-class midterm and an in-class final. Grad students will do additional reading and writing, including a take-home final.

Required books (available at Norris Center Store)

Sitney, P. Adams. **Visionary Film: The American Avant-garde, 1943-1978**. second edition. Oxford paperback

Tyler, Parker. **Underground Film: A Critical History** (DaCapo 1995) paperback

additional reading for grad students :

James, David E. **Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties**. Princeton Univ. Press. Paperback.

additional suggested reading (attend first class before purchase):

Charters, Ann. **The Portable Beat Reader** (Penguin/Viking, 1992)

week one

23 Sept

Stan Brakhage, **Mothlight** (Canyon) (1963, color, silent, 4 min.)

Marie Menken, **Arabesque for Kenneth Anger** (FMC) (c. 1960, color, sound, 4 min.)

Sallie Fuchs, **It Scares Me to Feel This Way** (Canyon) (1987, b&w 11 min)

Paul Sharits, **T,o,u,c,h,i,n,g** (FMC) (1968, sound, color, 12 min.)

week two

28 Sept

read: (on electronic reserve)

Berger, John. "The Moment of Cubism," in Berger, The Moment of Cubism and Other Essays. (2 hour reserve)

read: Tyler 1-31, Sitney 1-19

Sara Kathryn Arledge, **Introspection** (Canyon,) (1941, color, sound, 7 min.)

Maya Deren, **Meshes of the Afternoon** (NU) (1943, b&w, silent, 14 min.)

Brakhage, **Window Water Baby Moving** (NU) (1959, color, silent, 12 min.)

Bruce Conner, **5:10 to Dreamland** (1977, sepia, sound, 5.5 min) and **Valse Triste** (1979, b&w sound, 5 min.) (Canyon, special package #2)

mon 7-8 grads read Sitney 369-397

Hollis Frampton, **Nostalgia** (FMC) (1973, 36 min. b&w)

Ernie Gehr, **Serene Velocity** (FMC) (1970, 23 min, color)

30 Sept

read: (on electronic reserve)

Kirby, Michael. "The Aesthetics of the Avant-Garde," in Kirby, The Art of Time. 1969 (2 hour reserve)

Standish Lawder, **Runaway** (Canyon) (1969, b&w, 6 min.)

Jean Cocteau **Blood of a Poet** (NU) (c. 1930, France. silent c. 60 min.)

week three

5 Oct

read Tyler, 32-71

Man Ray, **Retour à la Raison** (1923, b&w, silent, 3 min.)

Rene Clair, **Entr'acte** (NU) (1924, b&w, silent 14 min.)

Robert Florey and Slavko Vorkapitch, **Life and Death of 9413, A Hollywood Extra** (1928, b&w, silent, 11 min.)

Luis Bunuel & Salvador Dali, **Un Chien Andalou** (An Andalousian Dog) (NU) (1928, b&w silent, 16 min.)

Fernand Leger, **Ballet Mechanique** (MoMA)

Lazlo Maholy-Nagy, **Maholy-Nagy Program** (35 min MoMA)

7 Oct

Hans Richter, **From Dada to Surrealism: 40 Years of Experiment** (MoMA, \$125)

contains: **Symphonie Diagonale** (exerpt) by Viking Eggeling, Germany 1922; **Rythmus 21** (1921, Germany, 3 min b&w sound); **Filmstudie** (1926, Germany, 4 min. B&W sound); **Inflation** (exerpt) 1928, Germany 4 min. B&W. sound; **Rennsymphonie** 1928 Germany, 5 min. b&w, sound; **Twopence Magic** (Zweigroshenzauber), 1929 Germany, 2 min., b&w, sound; **Everything Turns, Everything Revolves** (exerpt) 1929 Germany, 4 min b&w sound; **Ghosts Before Breakfast** (1928 6 min. B&w, sound --music by Paul Hindemith); **Dreams that Money Can Buy** (Desire episode) 1947 10 min color sound Inspired by and with a monologue written by Max Ernst. Music by Paul Bowles; **8 X 8** (Black Schemes episode) 1957 Switzerland, 13 min. Color, sound; **Dadascope** (La Chanson Dada episode) 4 min. color, sound.

week four

12 Oct

Sitney 20-46

Maya Deren, **Meshes of the Afternoon** (NU) (1943/59, b&w, sound, 14 min.)

Maya Deren, **At Land** (NU) (1944, b&w, silent, 15 min)

Maya Deren, **A Study in Choreography for the Camera** (FMC, \$28) (1945, b&w silent, 4 min)

Maya Deren, **Meditation on Violence** (1948. b&w, sound, 12 min.)

John Flory and Theodore Huff, **Mr. Motorboat's Last Stand** 1933, 16mm, b&w silent, c. 15 min.)

Nykino, **Pie in the Sky** (MoMA) (1935, 16 min b&w silent)

Joseph Cornell (Larry Jordan and Joseph Cornell) **3 by Cornell (Cotillion, The Midnight Party, Children's Party)** Canyon 25 min.

14 Oct

read: Sitney 47-92

Beatniks--commence additional reading

Maya Deren, **Ritual in Transfigured Time** (1945-6, b&w, silent, 15 min.)

Sidney Peterson, **The Cage**, (Canyon, \$45) (1947, b&w, sound, 25 min.)

James Broughton, **The Bed** (1968, color, sound, 19 min.)

week five

19 Oct

midterm

Gunvor Nelson, **My Name is Oona** (Canyon, \$20) (1969, b&w, sound, 9.5 min)

Sidney Peterson, **The Lead Shoes** (Canyon, \$45) (1949, b&w, sound, 18 min.)

Andrew Noren, **Adventures of the Exquisite Corpse part IV: Charmed Particles**
(MoMA) (1977, 90 min. b&w silent)

21 Oct

read: Tyler 72-131

Willard Maas, **Image in the Snow** (MoMA) (29 min b&w)

Jean Genet, **Un Chant D'Amour** (NY filmmakers Coop) (1950, 26 min.)

week six

26 Oct

read (on e-reserve) Kenneth Rexroth, *American Poetry in the Twentieth Century* (NY: Seabury, 1973 [rpt. of 1971] chapter 9 (pp 136-160)

read: Sitney 136-172, Tyler 131-196

Sara Kathryn Arledge, **What is a Man?** (FMC) (1958. color, sound, 10 min.)

Robert Frank & Alfred Leslie, **Pull My Daisy** (MOMA)

Edward Bland, **The Cry of Jazz**) (1959, b&w, sound, c. 20 min.)

Ken Jacobs, **Blonde Cobra** (MOMA) (1963 34 min)

Andy Warhol, **Blow Job** (MOMA) (1964, c. 41 min at 16 fps.)

28 Oct

read: Tyler to end

Shirley Clarke, **The Connection** (1961)

week seven

2 Nov

read: Sitney 93-135, 330-368

Marie Menken, **Hurry Hurry** (FMC,) (3 min.)

Carolee Schneeman, **Fuses**

Jack Smith, **Flaming Creatures** (Canyon, \$125) (1963, b&w, sound, 45 min)

Jonas Mekas **Guns of the Trees**

4 Nov

read: Sitney 305-329

Kenneth Anger, **Scorpio Rising** (Canyon) (1964, color, sound, 29 min.)

Gunvor Nelson and Dorothy Wylie, **Schmeerguntz** (Canyon) (1966, b&w, sound, 15 min.)

Christopher MacLaine **Beat** (NY Filmmakers Coop) (6 min)

Christopher MacLaine **The End** (NY Filmmakers Coop)(35min)

week eight

9 Nov

read: Sitney 173-227, 274-304

Ron Rice, **Senseless** (\$40 NY Filmmakers Coop) 28 min

Ron Rice **Chumlum** (FMC)26 min

Ron Rice **Mexican Footage** (FMC) 10 min.

Yvonne Rainer, **Lives of Performers**

11 Nov

New American Cinema: Scott Bartlett, (CK pers. copy) (1972, 60 min)

Scott Bartlett, 1970

week nine

16 Nov

Nina--

Sadie Benning assorted videos

Jennifer Reeves,

The Girl's Nervy

Monsters in the Closet

Chronic

Greta Snider, **Our Gay Brothers**

Diana Boder, **Dangerous When Wet**

Ann Severson, **Near the Big Chakra**

{Yvonne Rainer, **Film About A Woman Who**

18 Nov

Nina Martin to program

week ten

23 Nov

George Kuchar, **Hold Me While I'm Naked** (NU video)

Curt McDowell, **The Weiners and Buns Musical**, (Canyon, \$35) (1971, b&w, sound, 16 min.)

Richard Kern and Lydia Lunch, **The Right Side of my Brain** (CK pers copy) (c. 1984, S8mm/ video, 30 min.)

Peter Hutton, **July '71 in San Francisco...** (Canyon) (1971, 35 min.)

Peter Hutton, **New York Portrait, Chapter One** (Canyon) 1978-79, 16 min)

25 Nov

week eleven

read: Sitney 369-397, Sitney 228-274, 398-446

Jim Benning, **8 1/2 x 10** (FMC) (33 min. 1974)

Stephanie Beroes, **Debt Begins at 20** (Canyon) (1980 40 min.)

Susan Pitt **Asparagus** (Canyon) (1978, color, sound, 19 min.)

30 Nov.

Course evaluation

exam questions handed out

Ernie Gehr, **Shift** (Canyon,) (1972-74, color, sound, 9 min.)

Bruce Baillie, **Castro Street** (Canyon)(1966. color and b&w, sound, 10 min.)

Abigail Child **Mayhem** (Canyon)

Curt McDowell, **Nudes** (Canyon) 30 min.

Abigail Child **Mercy** (Canyon)

Greta Snider, **Portland**, (Canyon)

2 Dec

Bruce Baillie, **Roslyn Romance (Is It Really True?)** (Canyon) (1974, color, sound, 17 min.)

{Abigail Child **The B side** (FMC,) (38 min)}

Final Exam

Thurs. Dec 10 3-5

Because the films screened are usually not available elsewhere, such as at regular video stores, it is very important to attend class. Students with repeated absences will probably find it difficult or impossible to complete the course. If you have problems attending, talk about it ASAP with the TA and/or Prof.

Assignments. All students are required to turn in **five** reports of about 500-750 words on outside screening events. Two must be turned in before the midterm. The reports may be subjective or objective, concentrate on the overall experience or just one film/ tape, etc. There will be a list of suitable screenings/ events posted outside of Chuck's office and updates by e-mail. For undergrads, TWO parts this requirement can be partially fulfilled

by attending some screenings that will begin the Mon evening grad section--for about the first hour additional work will be shown. Undergrads can attend this part, and have it count for additional screening; after that there will be screening / discussion / lecture just for the grad students. The purpose of these fieldwork assignments is to give students additional screenings and experiences in Chicago's avant garde art and media community. Undergrads turn in reports to TA; grads to Chuck. 25% of final grade for undergrads, 20% for grads.

Grad students have an additional assignment (15% of final grade), which is to do additional outside reading, equivalent to a book. Students must prepare a 2-3 page set of notes, questions, or topics related to the outside reading (for distribution to the other students) (due 20 Nov. in class).

There are two **Internet** sites you might be interested in:

- a. The bulletin board experimental film discussion group Frameworks: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM . > For info on FrameWorks, contact Pip Chodorov at <PipChod@aol.com>.
- b. and the World Wide Web site: Flicker: <http://www.sirius.com/~sstark>

Books on reserve:

all of these are 3 day reserve (except those marked ***)

Battcock, Gregory, ed. The New American Cinema: A Critical Anthology. NY: E. P. Dutton, 1967.

***Berger, John. "The Moment of Cubism," in Berger, The Moment of Cubism and Other Essays. (2 hour reserve)

Clarke, Vève, et. al., The Legend of Maya Deren, Volume 1, part two, Chambers, 1942-47, NY: Anthology Film Archives, 1988. [ISBN 0-911689-17-6]

Dwoskin, Stephen. Film Is: The International Free Cinema. Woodstock NY: Overlook Press, 1975.

Ehrenstein, David. Film The Front Line, 1984. Denver: Arden Press, 1984.

Gidal, Peter. Materialist Film. London: Routledge, 1989.

Hanhardt, John G., ed. A History of the American Avant-Garde Cinema. NY: American Federation of Arts, 1976.

James, David E. Allegories Of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1989.

***Kirby, Michael. "The Aesthetics of the Avant-Garde," in Kirby, The Art of Time. 1969 (2 hour reserve)

LeGrice, Malcolm. Abstract Film and Beyond. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1977.

Macdonald, Scott. A Critical Cinema: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers. Berkeley: U of California, 1988.

Macdonald, Scott. A Critical Cinema 2: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers. Berkeley: U of California, 1992.

Macdonald, Scott. Avant-Garde Film: Motion Studies. Cambridge, Cambridge U.P. 1993.

Mekas, Jonas. Movie Journal: The Rise of a New American Cinema, 1959-1971. NY: Collier, 1972.

O'Pray, Michael, ed. Andy Warhol: Film Factory. London: British Film Institute, 1989.

Renan, Sheldon. An Introduction to the American Underground Film. NY: E. P. Dutton, 1967.

Rosenbaum, Jonathan. Film: The Front Line, 1983. Denver: Arden Press, 1983.

Rowe, Carol. The Baudelairean Cinema: A Trend within the American Avant-Garde. Ann Arbor: UMI Research, 1982.

Russett, Robert, and Cecile Starr. Experimental Animation: An Illustrated Anthology. NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1976.

Schneemann, Carolee. More Than Meat Joy: Complete Performance Works and Selected Writings. New Paltz, NY: Documentext, 1979.

Sitney, P. Adams, ed. Film Culture Reader. NY: Praeger, 1970.

Sitney, P. Adams, ed. The Essential Cinema: Essays on the Films in the Collection of Anthology Film Archives. Vol. 1. NY: New York U. P., 1975.

Sitney, P. Adams, ed. The Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism. NY: New York U. P., 1978.

Tyler, Parker. Underground Film: A Critical History. NY: Grove, 1969.

Vogel, Amos. Film As A Subversive Art. NY: Random House, 1974.

Youngblood, Gene. Expanded Cinema. NY: Dutton, 1970.

Exams. The midterm will count 30% of the final grade and consists of short answers of readings and screenings plus writing a short essay (in class) on a film to be shown in class. (25% for Grads) The final (35% of final grade) will be in two parts: writing an essay after seeing an unannounced film (about 40 min). The second part is over the entire course--screenings, readings, lectures and discussion.

Final grade formula:

undergrads--discussion 10%, five outside screening reports 25%; midterm 30%, final 35%.
grads--discussion 10%, midterm 25%, five outside screening reports 20%; reading report 15%, final 30%.

How to get to the **outside screenings** (phone first!):

Chicago Filmmakers (312-384-5533; 1543 W. Division) Filmmakers office is based in the Wicker Park Area and is located at the intersection of Division, Milwaukee, and Ashland. However the screening sites vary--often at the **Xoinx** tea house on Lincoln ave, sometimes at the **Chicago Cultural Center** in the loop, and the **Chicago Historical Society**.

Film Center, School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Columbus and Jackson, 443-3737. (behind the Museum) Drive: Outer Drive to Monroe, west to Columbus Drive, park on Columbus or Monroe St. garage (offers escort to car at night). El: exit at Jackson, east to

Columbus (over the IC tracks). The school has a cafeteria and machines. Grant Park can be a fairly deserted area at night, if you park there, be alert. The Film Center is on the second floor)

Facets Multimedia. 1517 W. Fullerton. 281-4114. Drive: Outer Drive to Fullerton, west to Facets. Or Ridge to Ashland, Ashland to Fullerton, east one block. El/bus: exit at Fullerton. Take Fullerton bus West. This is a gentrifying neighborhood, with a few restaurants, coffee shops and bars, mostly on Fullerton, but if you go back east to Halsted/Lincoln/Fullerton there are a lot of live music bars, restaurants, etc. Note: Facets is notorious for having the worst projection in Chicago; expect anything; you won't be too surprised (but everyone in the media community has horror stories). They do have an outstanding selection of video tapes for rental/sale--lots of European films, etc. One of the very best video rental places in the country.

The **Chicago Underground Film Festival** is screening from time to time in the area, often in Wicker Park bars/coffeehouses. The Chicago Underground Film Festival <http://www.cuff.org> 773-327-FILM

Some other venues may be announced; the Chicago International Film Festival, and the Chicago Lesbian and Gay Festival will all take place this fall; updated information will be posted outside Chuck's office.

For the first assignment, students may choose either the current show at the Museum of Contemporary Art (near north, off Michigan Ave.) or the galleries of 20th Century painting at the Art Institute (Michigan at Adams). Free Tuesday.